

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR

HOUSE BILL NO. 2771

By: Caldwell (Trey) and Kane of
the House

and

Hall and Haste of the
Senate

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

An Act relating to courts; amending 20 O.S. 2021,
Section 122, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 430,
O.S.L. 2024 (20 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 122), which
relates to special judges; increasing the number of
special judges in specific counties; determining a
date certain for the increase; providing an effective
date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 20 O.S. 2021, Section 122, as
amended by Section 1, Chapter 430, O.S.L. 2024 (20 O.S. Supp. 2024,
Section 122), is amended to read as follows:

The number of special judges that may be appointed in each
judicial administrative district shall be determined as follows:

1. A special judge shall be appointed on the basis of one
special judge for each county within the administrative district

1 with a population of at least twenty-four thousand (24,000), as
2 determined by the 1960 Federal Decennial Census. An additional
3 special judge shall be appointed for each additional fifty thousand
4 (50,000) in population in a county within the administrative
5 district, as determined by the 1960 Federal Decennial Census. Such
6 appointment may be made from any county in the administrative
7 district. Such appointments shall be made by the district judges in
8 their respective judicial administrative districts. Any judge of a
9 special sessions court shall be one of the special judges for the
10 balance of his or her term and shall be within the number prescribed
11 for such district.

12 2. In addition to the special judges that may be appointed
13 pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 1 of this section, there
14 shall be:

- 15 a. one (1) special judge appointed in the Northwest-
16 Panhandle Judicial Administrative District comprised
17 of District Court Judicial Districts Numbers One (1),
18 Two (2) and Four (4), to serve in Custer County,
- 19 b. beginning July 1, 2025, three (3) ~~one (1)~~ special
20 ~~judge~~ judges appointed in the Oklahoma-Canadian
21 Counties Judicial Administrative District comprised of
22 District Court Judicial District Number Seven (7),
- 23 c. beginning July 1, 2024, five (5) special judges
24 appointed in the Tulsa-Pawnee Counties Judicial

- Administrative District comprised of District Court
Judicial District Number Fourteen (14),
- d. beginning January 11, 1999, one (1) special judge
appointed in the Northeastern Judicial Administrative
District comprised of District Court Judicial
Districts Numbers Ten (10), Eleven (11), Twelve (12)
and Thirteen (13), to serve in Rogers County,
- e. one (1) special judge appointed in the North-Central
Judicial Administrative District comprised of District
Court Judicial District Numbers Eight (8), Nine (9)
and Twenty-three (23), to serve in Lincoln and
Pottawatomie Counties,
- f. beginning January 1, 2006, one (1) special judge
appointed in the East-Central Judicial Administrative
District comprised of District Court Judicial District
Numbers Fifteen (15), Eighteen (18) and Twenty-four
(24), to serve in Pittsburg and McIntosh Counties,
- g. beginning January 1, 2006, one (1) special judge
appointed in the Northeastern Judicial Administrative
District comprised of District Court Judicial District
Numbers Ten (10), Eleven (11), Twelve (12) and
Thirteen (13), to serve in Washington County, and
- h. beginning January 1, 2007, one (1) special judge
appointed in the Southeastern Judicial Administrative

1 District comprised of District Court Judicial District
2 Numbers Sixteen (16), Seventeen (17), Nineteen (19),
3 and Twenty-five (25), to serve in Le Flore County.

4 3. If a vacancy occurs in the office of associate district
5 judge, or if an associate district judge becomes unable to perform
6 the duties of his or her office, as determined by the presiding
7 judge of the judicial administrative district, a special judge may
8 be appointed within the judicial administrative district to hold
9 office for the duration of such vacancy or incapacity. After the
10 vacancy is filled, or after the associate district judge becomes
11 able to perform the duties of his or her office, the special judge
12 shall have the power to act in regard to any case which he or she
13 has already tried, but the presiding judge of the judicial
14 administrative district may transfer such a case to any other judge
15 in the judicial administrative district.

16 4. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court may authorize the
17 appointment of such additional special judges as may be necessary
18 for the proper administration of justice. Such additional special
19 judges shall be appointed after application by a majority of the
20 district judges of a judicial administrative district, stating the
21 reason why an additional special judge is needed. Such additional
22 judges need not be based upon population figures.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.
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SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby
declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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